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	CPR-00	DIM-00	DODE-00	PERC-00	DS-00	OIGO-00	VCI-00
	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	MOFM-00	MOF-00
	VCIE-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00	NSCE-00	NIMA-00	PA-00	MCC-00
	GIWI-00	ISNE-00	FMPC-00	IRM-00	SS-00	USSS-00	R-00
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INFO AMEMBASSY ASMARA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 115689

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/05/2019  
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SUBJECT: (U) Secretary Clinton's November 5, 2009  
conversation with Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin

11. Classified by AF Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson.  
Reason: 1.4 (d)

12. (U) November 5, 2009; 11:00 a.m.; Washington, D.C.

13. (SBU) Participants:

U.S.  
The Secretary  
AF Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson  
U.S. Charge d'Affaires Roger Meece  
Acting USAID Administrator Alonzo Fulgham  
DoD Deputy Assistant Secretary Vicki Huddleston  
NSC Senior Director Michelle Gavin  
PA Deputy Spokesman Robert Wood  
S Executive Assistant Joe Macmanus  
Joel Wiegert (AF Notetaker)

ETHIOPIA  
Seyoum Mesfin, Foreign Minister  
Sufian Ahmed, Finance Minister  
Girma Birru, Trade Minister  
Siraj Fegess, Defense Minister  
Terfer Deribew, Agriculture Minister  
Getachew Assefa, Intelligence Chief  
Samuel Assefa, Ethiopian Ambassador to the U.S.

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SUMMARY  
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14. (C) The Secretary expressed appreciation for the longstanding and deep bilateral relationship, especially on regional security concerns such as Somalia and Eritrea. After acknowledging the difficulties of democratization in an unstable regional environment, she underscored the importance of staying on a democratic track, noting that the 2010 parliamentary election would "buttress the legacy of your government." The Ethiopian Foreign Minister (FM) thanked the Secretary for our "all-weather" relationship, noted Ethiopia's commitment to expanding security cooperation, and recognized that democratic governance was necessary for his government to remain viable. END  
SUMMARY.

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SECURITY COOPERATION  
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15. (C) The Secretary applauded "our extraordinary security cooperation" and assured the FM that we understood that

instability in the region places a heavy burden on Ethiopia. Thanking the Government of Ethiopia (GOE) for its contributions to peacekeeping missions to Darfur and Liberia, she said the USG considered the GOE military professional and effective. On Somalia, she thanked the GOE for its past involvement and lauded intelligence sharing, training of Somali security forces, and assisting with the Somaliland electoral crisis. She underscored the need for Ethiopia's discreet support for Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Highlighting current difficulties in reaching out to the Isaias regime, she asked for Ethiopia's advice on how to change the direction of our engagement with the Government of Eritrea.

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DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC REFORM  
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¶16. (C) On governance issues, a sensitive area for GOE, she acknowledged that regional security concerns made the transition to democracy more difficult. Calling on the FM "to stay on track," she committed the USG to supporting a democratic agenda in Ethiopia. She said that the 2010 election was important and would "buttress the legacy of your government." She pressed the FM on the GOE's repressive NGO law, asking the GOE to differentiate among the NGOs working in Ethiopia. The Secretary pointed out that civil society was "the best guard for stability." She called on Ethiopia to "set a different example" that reflects the principles of democratic governance we promote in the region and beyond. Finally, she noted that we would like to work with Ethiopia on democracy and governance.

¶17. (SBU) The FM affirmed the GOE had "no sensitivity to table any agenda." He stated that his government believed democracy was critical to its viability. He highlighted Ethiopian efforts to create the proper legal framework for the upcoming election, citing the recent Electoral Code of Conduct as a positive step. He underscored the GOE "commitment to continue doing what is required" but noted it is a difficult undertaking.

¶18. (SBU) The Secretary also commented on economic reform, pointing to the potential of Ethiopia as an economic engine for the region. She called for the opening up of the telecommunications, banking, and insurance sectors to private investors, noting that when these important changes took place Ethiopia would reap huge benefits.

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FOOD SECURITY  
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¶19. (SBU) The FM confirmed that the GOE's interest in the President's Food Security Initiative as a way to move from food assistance to agricultural development. The Secretary explained that the new initiative was a country and community-led program that would build capacity and increase agricultural productivity. Noting the huge challenges facing Africa, she outlined the plans to transition countries to food security using measures such as distributing hybrid seeds, training farmers how to get higher yields, and improving irrigation methods. While we will continue to give food aid, she said, "We want to shift to getting you to grow more food."

CLINTON